

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 6323

BILL NUMBER: HB 1312

NOTE PREPARED: May 16, 2007

BILL AMENDED: Apr 29, 2007

SUBJECT: Accountants.

FIRST AUTHOR: Rep. Austin

FIRST SPONSOR: Sen. C. Lawson

BILL STATUS: Enrolled

FUNDS AFFECTED: ☒ **GENERAL**
☒ **DEDICATED**
FEDERAL

IMPACT: State

Summary of Legislation: This bill has the following provisions:

Board of Accountancy- The bill requires the Board of Accountancy to adopt rules for a quality review of CPA and PA firms that renew permits to practice accountancy and investigate a complaint made by a board of accountancy or the equivalent of a board of accountancy in another state. The bill provides that the members' terms expire on June 30.

Accountant Investigative Fund- The bill establishes the Accountant Investigative Fund to provide funds for administering and enforcing accountancy laws and a civil penalty of \$25,000 for certain violations. The bill provides that the Fund consists of fees assessed against certified accountants and civil penalties collected. The bill continually appropriates money from the Fund to the Professional Licensing Agency (PLA) for its use in administering and enforcing accountancy laws. The bill allows the Attorney General and the PLA to enter into a memorandum of understanding to provide the Attorney General with funds to conduct investigations and pursue enforcement of the accountancy laws.

CPA Certificates- The bill eliminates the requirement that an individual with a valid CPA certificate or similar qualifications from another state who intends to conduct business as a CPA in Indiana must notify the Board of that intent. The bill provides that a CPA firm that employs individuals who have all the privileges granted to a CPA certificate holder consents to certain actions and requirements.

Accounting Practitioners- The bill repeals provisions concerning certification of accounting practitioners.

Effective Date: July 1, 2007.

Explanation of State Expenditures: *Accountant Investigative Fund*- Expenditures to administer and enforce the accountancy statute would be paid from the fund. The PLA would administer the fund. The existing level of resources available to the PLA would be sufficient to administer the new fund.

Explanation of State Revenues: *Accountant Investigative Fund*- Revenue generated by an investigation fee of no more than \$10 per year and civil penalties would be deposited into the Accountant Investigative Fund established by the bill. Money in the fund that exceeds a balance of \$750,000 at the end of a state fiscal year would revert to the state General Fund. The PLA would be able to enter into an agreement to provide fees deposited into the Investigative Fund to the Attorney General to investigate professional licensing violations.

Fee: The investigation fee would be assessed in addition to the fee to issue or renew a certificate or permit. The fee would be applicable to certified public accountants, public accountants, and accounting practitioners. Current accountancy administrative rules provide for a "triennial registration period" with fees of \$75 in the first year, \$50 in the second year, and \$25 in the third year. If the proposed investigative fee were assessed at \$10, certified public accounts, public accountants, and accounting practitioners would expect to pay \$85 in year one, \$60 in year two, and \$35 in year three of their registration cycle. Based on the last three years of license counts, a \$10 fee could generate on average about \$121,000 per year with some years potentially generating more and others generating less than \$121,000. Ultimately, the amount of revenue generated would depend on the fee amount set by rule and the number of active license holders per year. As of December 15, 2006, there were 8,932 CPAs, 94 PAs, and 13 APs actively licensed.

Civil Penalty: The Board would be allowed to impose a civil penalty of not more than \$25,000 per violation on individuals or firms found to have knowingly committed a violation under the accountancy statute.

Explanation of Local Expenditures:

Explanation of Local Revenues:

State Agencies Affected: State Board of Accountancy; Professional Licensing Agency; Attorney General.

Local Agencies Affected:

Information Sources: Professional Licensing Agency; 872 IAC 1-1-10.

Fiscal Analyst: Chris Baker, 317-232-9851.